A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION

Thursday, September 12. 1706.

I Could not avoid beſtowing one Paper in this Vacancy of Forreign Intelligence, upon the publick Conjectures now made of Affairs abroad; If I am ſerved in this, as I was once before, that a Poſt ſhould clap in between the Pen and the Preſs, or rather between the Preſs and the Publication, and ſo the Paper look like a Conjurer, that propheſies after a thing is come to paſs; all could be ſaid would be; that there's a Paper thrown away, and good for nothing, and I hope, the Reader will bear with the Diſappointment.

From *Portugal*, we are in Hopes of a great Battle and total Defeat of King *Philip* and his whole Army; from *Italy* we are amazed with the great Things told us of a Fight between Prince *Eugene* and the Duke of *Orleans*, the Duke wounded, Mareſchal *Marſin* ſlain, the whole Army defeated, the Siege of *Turin* rais'd, Cannon and Priſoners on both ſides taken without Number.

Nor will I fill the Heads of People here with the Improbabilities of theſe things, as how it will correſpond with Prince *Eugene* having been 3 Days March before the Duke of *Orleans*, and the latter all along ſtudiouſly ſhunning a Battle; or that the State of the Caſe conſider'd, it was really not his Buſineſs to fight, but to protract the Time, interrupt the March of the Imperialiſts, defend the Paſſes, Rivers, &c.

Nor is it any ſcruple to me, that this News comes without a Meſſenger, and that no body can tell how they come by the particulars of it; 'tis not always neceſſary, that we ſhould be able to give an exact Account of Originals, to every Story we hear —And yet the Story may be true too.

Nay

Nay, tho' the thing may not be true juſt now, it may be true by that Time the lame Poſt comes, and that will pleaſe us not at all the leſs, of which I can give a remarkable Inſtance, which I beleive, is freſh in the Memories of a great many that will read this Paper.

It was above 3 Weeks before the Battle at *Blenheim*, *not before we heard of it*; *I mean*, *but before it was really fought*, that we had juſt ſuch a hot Flight of News without either Poſt, Expreſs, Probability or real Matter of Fact. 'Twas in every body's Mouth, that the Duke of *Marlborough* had beaten the *French* and *Bavarians*, entirely defeated their Armies, taken all their Baggage and Cannon, and kill'd a great many thouſand of their Men, and particularly that Monſieur *Tallard* was taken Priſoner.

What lucky forebodeing Devil contriv'd a Lye ſo exactly ſquare to a Truth that was not then born, I know not—— But it was ſo confidently reported, that People were perfectly amus'd with it; ſome believ'd it, ſome doubted it, ſome ſtrove with all their Might to believe it, becauſe they wiſh't it to be true, but could not reconcile it to their Reaſon, how they came by the News——And among theſe, *I muſt confeſs my ſelf one*, and I cannot ſmile to look back upon ſome very honeſt Gentlemen, and remember, how angry they were with me, that I could not be perſwaded to believe the News, before it was really true—

I confeſs, when News comes ſo red hot, and from ſo many Places, and yet we know, there has been no Poſt, no real Advice; I cannot be too forward in believing it, tho' I never ſo ſincerely deſire its being confirmed; and this Waryneſs of mine may proceed from the World's being ſo often amus'd with meer Chimeras and Suppoſitions.

A meer Sham of no bodys raiſing, ſometimes grows like a Miſt from the Ground, and ſpreads over a great Part of the World; ſo that its coming from abroad can be no real Authority, unleſs it comes the direct Way, and by hands we know; how univerſally did the News ſpread over *Europe* the other day, even to *Vienna*, *Venice*, *Rome*, *Spain* and *England*, that the Duke of *Marlborough* was beaten, his Army routed, and himſelf killed.

But, ſince I am ſo backward to believe, yet that I may not cool our rational Expectations, I deſire to enter a little with the Cuſtom of the Age into the Probabilities of things by way of Entertainment; in which I hope, the Reader will not expect I ſhould account for any more than my own Opinion, which if it prove right, I claim nothing uncommon in Praiſe of my Judgment; if wrong, I ſhall think it no Capital Diſgrace to my Calculation, that I am miſtaken.

From *Portugal*, I confeſs, the General State of things makes us expect a Battle, eſpecially concluding our Accounts true; that my Lord *Galway* has been joyn'd by King *Charles*, and the Earl of *Peterborough*; if a Battle, I am in no Pain; for the Succeſs, being fully perſwaded in my Lord *Galway*'s Judgment and Experience, that he would not be forc'd to fight to Diſ-advantage; and upon Equalities the *French* never had any reaſon to value themſelves any where. I confeſs, it ſeems to me, the Fate of *France* puſhes them upon Precipitations and unaccountable Hazards; for if I ſee any Length into the Affairs of *Spain*, it was not King *Philip*'s Buſineſs to fight after the Conjunction of the *Engliſh* Forces, but to linger out the War there, if poſſible, till this unhappy Campaign being over in other Places, the *French* might have power'd in Troops on every ſide to his Aſſiſtance, and in a Winter War he might have been ſuperiour to us, whoſe remote Supplies could not have been ready to match him; if then, he has puſh'd at a Battle againſt our united Armies, he ventur'd his Crown like a raſh Gameſter, where he had no occaſion.

As to fighting, if we are beaten we are undone, I mean as to the Men, they had all the reaſon in the World to be wary; for as the Armies lay, the *French* being between them and *Portugal*; if we were routed, I ſee no Eſcape. *Barcelona* and the Fleet is 250 mile at leaſt, and how ſhould a broken Body of Men diſpirited and diſperſ'd reach ſuch a length; the *Portugueſe* would be certainly all cut off, the very native Averſion of the *Spaniards* to them would be their Deſtruction; as to King *Charles*— I need not enlarge on his Condition, if he loſt a Battle.

From

From whence I conclude, my Lord *Galway*, whose Experience his Enemies have always given an honourable Testimony to, would on no Terms hazard a Battle in such Circumstances, unless his Advantages were such as made him out of all Concern for the Success.

Upon the whole, therefore I conclude, 'tis a Victory or no Battle in *Spain*, the Probabilities of an Engagement do not seem great to me; but if it has been a Fight, it must have been that we have attack'd them in their Camp, and of the Justness of this Remark, Time will determine.

As to *Italy*, to my Thoughts a general Battle cannot seem probable; if our Accounts from thence have been true, if Prince *Eugene* was in full March for *Piemont*, if he had gain'd 2 Days start of the Duke of *Orleans*, how then should they fight; unless we must allow the *French* to recover that Advantage, and fall upon him, which still is not agreeable to the Nature of the thing.

If then there has been any considerable Action, and the Reader will accept my Conjectures, it must be thus.

Either Prince *Eugene* advancing has attack'd the *French* at the Pass of *Stradella*, which if he has done and it be true, as we have been told, that the *French* had 12000 Men posted there, besides the Duke *de Feuillade*'s Horse and Dragoons, which to the Number of 6000 were marching thither, it must have been a very bloody Action.

Or, it must be a Battle between the *Hessians* and the Count *de Medavi* on the Banks of the *Oglio*, where the Hereditary Prince of *Hess*, with his own Troops and 5000 *Germans* left by Prince *Eugene*, was pushing forward to second that Prince, maintain his Communication, make a Diversion, and if possible, to enter the *Milanese*.

In either of these Cases, an Action in *Italy* may be very probable, and where ever it has happen'd, without doubt it was very bloody; but for a sett Battle between Prince *Eugene* and the Duke of *Orleans*, I cannot think it probable—Not but that in either of these Places, an Action to the Advantage of the Imperialists will have the same Event, *viz.* the saving *Turin*; for if either the Count *de Medavi* be beaten by the Prince of *Hess*, or the Pass of *Stradella* won by Prince *Eugene*, I think 'tis no question, the Duke *de Feuillade* will not continue that Seige an Hour after he has the News of it —— The Glorious Successes of Prince *Eugene* in forcing all the Strengths Lines and Entrenchments of the *French*, and the Passes of such a difficult Country, under the Circumstances also of doing this in the Face of a powerful and experienc'd Army, directed by the greatest General the King of *France* has left ——And this carried on thro' a March of above 200 Miles from the upper *Adige* to the Pass of *Stradella*, are things of such prodigious and unaccountable a Nature, that they leave us little Ground to fear, but he will compleat the Campaign with the same Conduct and the same Success.

The *French* are not so insensible or the Conduct of this Prince, as to lie in their Trenches before *Turin*, till they shall be attack'd there by a victorious Army; who having march'd so far to find them, will not fail to fall on them in their strongest Works.

We have great Cause to hope therefore, the next Post will bring us some important News from thence, and that whether the present Reports are real or imaginary, if the Success be any where so, as that the Siege of *Turin* shall be but rais'd, and the brave Duke of *Savoy* rescued from Ruin, 'tis enough.

Mean time, all the Princes in the World are in Debt to that Heroe, he has not only out-done all that went before him, but set the noblest Example of Courage and Constancy, that History can furnish in the most remote Ages of the World——But I shall say no more of that here, I shall endeavour to do him Justice by it self.

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